

Depot Town Rag

A PUBLICATION OF THE DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC.

The Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198

April 1988
for the good of the block
in the Old Caboose unless noted:

Artists & Artisans
7:30 p.m. Monday 4/7

Foundation
8:00 p.m. Thursday 4/7

Association
7:30 p.m. Thursday 4/21

Antique Engine Club
7:30 p.m. Thursday 4/28
Freight House

Shopping districts of the Rich and Famous

Just like on television department: No one paid any particular attention at Miller's Ice Cream Parlor on Friday, March 11th, but once the ladies from Peddler's Path pointed it out to them, they marked the seat for his fans to use as a local shrine to the baddest guy on *Dallas*.

When Sharon Stein and Ken Kercheval continued their shopping down the block at Peddler's Path, Lisa Gaines recognized them as 'celebs' and blurted out in true mid-western fashion, "You're somebody, aren't you? Don't tell me. You're, you're... I know! You're..."

Whereupon Stein said, "Yes. I'm from *Kelly and Company*." But that wasn't what Lisa was looking for. She was looking at Kercheval's familiar profile.

"No! Him! He's the one."

He's that nasty bad guy, Cliff, from *Dallas*, and Lisa got both their autographs. After a moment's reflection, the crew at the Ice Cream Parlor memorialized Kercheval's chair for posterior posterity.

Next month: Robin Leach covers Boomer Days.

Announcing Apple Annie's awesome advertising amenity

Notice the nifty, new neon adorning the aperture of James MacDonald's Antiques & Apple Annie's Vintage Clothing. Alliteration aside, this classic advertising art was rescued from another, earlier, use and finds an even more appropriate home in Depot Town. In an earlier issue, *The Rag* pointed out the 'at home' feeling of neon in this old block. Annie's is one of the loveliest examples to be added in recent years.

**Jim MacDonald's Antiques
Apple Annie's
Vintage Clothing**

29 East Cross • 481-0555
Page 5 DTA, April 1988

The Commercial Italianate Architectural Style

— in Ypsilanti's Nineteenth Century Depot Town

All rights reserved - The Depot Town Rag, 1988

Part Four: The Bracketed Cornice Components The Crown Jewels are Coming Back to Depot Town

"A house without an overhang is like a face without eyebrows." And, at Serenity House, they're talking about how much more pleasurable is an over-hang, than a hang-over.

That's what the cornice is all about — adding a finishing feature to the face (facade) of the building. And, in the Commercial Italianate Style, that horizontal, overhanging cornice at the top of the front of the building is the single most distinguishing characteristic.

The cornice is the crown, with all its jewels and silver and gold. And, in some cases, one cornice wasn't enough. In Depot Town, most buildings of this period had another, small, cornice at the top of the first floor. Take a walk through downtown Ypsilanti, and you'll see many first floor cornices which have been replicated in the last year. Some of Depot Town's are still intact. These were the mounting line for sign boards above (or inside) and the awning below. Still more were removed along with the super cornices in the Sixties, when city ordinances all over the country demanded it.



Seems they had a terrible habit of falling off the buildings after so many years of ice build-up in their mounting mortar, and eventually dropped off if the owner wasn't paying close attention to what was happening up on the roof. Detroit saw a particular grisly tragedy in the 1950's when a huge chunk of masonry came loose and killed a shopper along Woodward Avenue. The papers 'viewed with alarm' and, since it was long before the dawn of the historic preservation movement, city councils quickly passed ordinances demanding their removal.

As long as the ladders were up there, reasoned many local handymen, why not just knock all that old fashioned stuff and see if we can get these horizontally-oriented buildings to look more like the shopping centers out on the edge of town? Why not, indeed? The cornice removals heralded the disappearance of most of the Italianate edifices across the country.

The main reason districts like Depot Town hung on longer was because we were too poor to get all that old junk off the fronts of our buildings. Really 'modern' developers were leveling whole downtowns into parking lots and Urban Renewal served to convince just about

continued on page two

The Bluewater Michigan Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society
presents the YES! MICHIGAN TRAIN

RAILROAD DAYS SPECIAL

Saturday, May 7, 1988 — Ann Arbor to Durand, Michigan

The **Railroad Days Special** will travel over the Ann Arbor Railroad from Ferry Yard next to The University of Michigan Football Stadium to Pitt Junction on the outskirts of Durand. Trackage between Ferry Yard and Osmer, just north of Ann Arbor is owned by the Ann Arbor Railroad. From Osmer to Pitt, the line is owned by the State of Michigan and operated by the Tuscola & Saginaw Bay Railway.

The **Railroad Days Special** will skirt Whitmore Lake and other inland lakes in Washtenaw and Livingston counties and then cross the fertile farmlands of Shiawassee county enroute to the annual *Railroad Days Festival* in Durand. This will be the first public passenger train to operate over these 50 miles of track in more that 35 years.

From Pitt Junction, there will be complimentary bus service for the mile into downtown Durand and the heart of the *Railroad Days Festival*. This event, featuring old fashioned small town hospitality, was begun as part of the national Bicentennial in 1976 and commemorates more than a century of prominence for Durand as a Michigan rail center. Attractions at the festival include a parade and carnival, flea market and craft sales with a railroad theme and genuine hobo stew prepared by King of the Hoboes, Stem Train Maury Graham.

There will be plenty of opportunities to feast and to meander through the village. Former Grand Trunk Wester 4-6-2 Pacific type steam locomotive Number 5632 will be on display. The Durand Memorial Railroaders Museum will be open as well as the historic Durand Union Depot built in 1905 and now undergoing restoration.

The Railroad Days Special will consist of a variety of coaches, First Class lounge cars and a Snack & Souvenir Car that will serve coffee, doughnuts, light snacks, soft drinks, candy, chips and popcorn. Souvenirs, publications and railroad memorabilia will be on sale. First Class service will include comfortable lounge car seating, complimentary hors d'oeuvres, coffee, tea, soft drinks and snacks. Powering the train will be diesel-electric locomotives operated by the Tuscola & Saginaw Bay.

Schedule: The train will depart Ferry Yard at 9:00 a.m. and reach Pitt Junction at 12:30 p.m. The return trip departs Pitt Junction at 4:30 p.m. and we will be back in Ann Arbor at 7:30 p.m.

Adult Coach Tickets at \$39

Children, ages 5-12, Coach Tickets at \$32

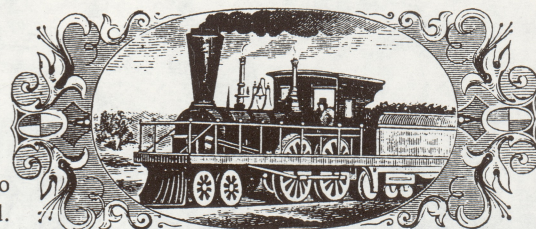
First Class Tickets at \$69

Tickets by mail: Bluewater Michigan Chapter, P.O. Box 269R, Royal Oak, MI 48068-1296, attention: Railroad Days Special.

Tickets by telephone using VISA or MasterCard: 272-5848, 264-4418 or 399-7963.

Tickets in person: Plymouth Yard Hobbies, 904 Starkweather at the CSX tracks in Plymouth during normal business hours.

For more information: Metro Detroit: 272-5848, 264-4418 or 399-7963 between 1:00 and 8:30 p.m.



Other Bluewater Chapter rail trips:

Railroad Days Special

May 7

Ann Arbor to Durand, MI

Tulip Time Flyer

May 13 to Holland, Michigan

Tulip Time Express

May 14 to Holland, Michigan

Forth Wayne Flyer

July 9 & 10

Allen Park, Milan, Adrian MI to Fort Wayne IN for Three Rivers Festival

Cincinnati Banner

July 16-17

Allen Park MI to Muncie IN to Cincinnati OH

Marshall Special

September 9 & 10

Amtrak via Detroit, Deaborn, Ann Arbor, Marshall

Lake Michigan Resort Special

September 16-18

Livonia & Lansing to Luddington, Lake Michigan ferry to Kewaunee WI

Other possibilities:

- Niagara Falls
- Dayton OH
- Detroit Thanksgiving Day Parade
- Fall Color trip

For further information:

The bluewater Michigan Chapter
P.O. Box 266
Royal Oak, MI 48068

Best Yet Award - Apple Annie's gorgeous new sign and the bright new lighting in the north parking lot.

Golden Goose - old man winter's last visit. He's a guest outstaying his welcome.

A Birthday Celebration Saturday, April 9, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

The Ypsilanti Food Co-op is celebrating it's 13th birthday. Along with the celebration comes an opportunity to collect recipies and sample 'alternative' celebration fare. For instance, there will be sweets without sugar and other concoctions that are good, as well as good for you (or at least more healthful than the usual stuff). This is also a chance for all of those interested in the co-op to gather together and have some fun -- no meetings or chores to get in the way on this special occasion. There will be music and lots of food, so stop by sometime during the day and check out the festivities.

Ike's Depot Town Barbershop

40 East Cross • 483-6300

The Grand Trunk, Ltd.

Cards & Gifts

15 East Cross 485-4994

Hon's

Flowers & Fancies

46 East Cross 482-2124

City Radiator

110 North River 483-2248
Page 4 DTA, April 1988



THE DEPOT TOWN RAG:

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc., a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

★ ★

Standard Printing
Company

35 E. Cross Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198

483-0339

★ ★

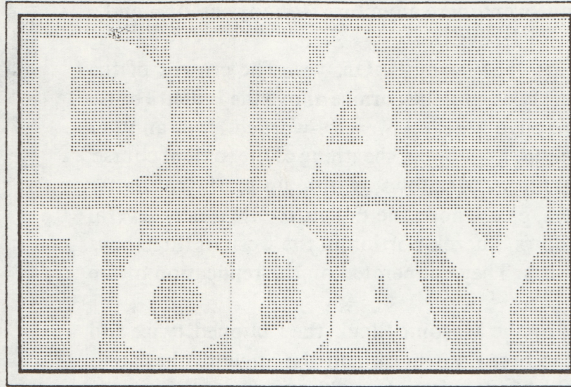
April 1988

The Neighborhood's Newspaper
Number One in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town

NEWSLINE: DTA
TODAY

- ☐ Ypsi Opry
- ☐ Depot progress
- ☐ Jazz reviewed
- ☐ Fourth in a series on Italianate cornices
- ☐ DTA minutes from March
- ☐ Loyal sponsors' ads

*cut out and peek through at the MCRR depot.



All the news
in one block
in one month!

Inside DTA TODAY:

Only the front page continues *The Rag's* tradition of the April (fools) parody. The rest of the issue is as serious as we ever get down here. -ed.

Lots of pictures and graphics Over 1500 monthly readers and some of their friends who can read, too! Estimated reading time: 20 minutes.



Not the real thing. Just a satirical parody. Only kidding.

Oh, sure. This isn't really a copy of USA TODAY — it's just a little parody of the real thing. Jerry Falwell can't collect on this one, either. We said - right from the outset - that this front page was intended as a parody, didn't we? In fact, you'll find no libelous cartoons anywhere in this issue. That was last month. And nobody noticed.

Your copy might look more like that national slicker if you would take blue and pink marking pens and fill in some of the letters across the banner at the top of page one. Down in Depot Town, we can't afford all those extra runs of the press to include trendy colors for non-readers.

Your editors have made every effort not to print anything really substantial on the front page. Take this article, for instance: it's shallow and superficial, not carefully researched, just an approximation of what the district's news really is for this month. Why, you might say we've taken shallowness to new depths.

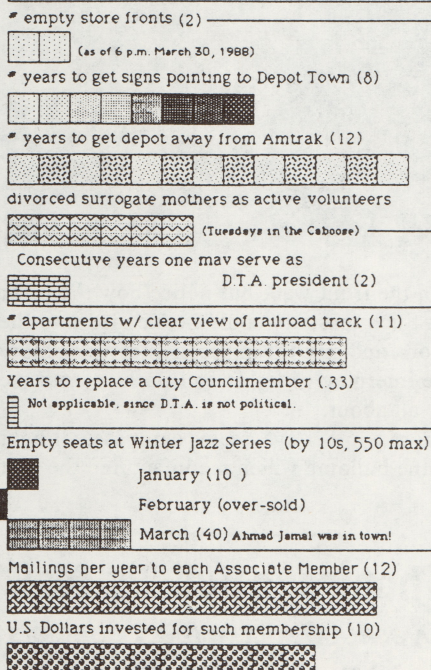
You just might find more news by cutting a hole in the page and looking through it at those old buildings and their many creative projects which continue throughout the year. In fact, your membership entitles you to monthly mailings of *The Depot Town Rag* — which can give you the most up-to-date news on the comings and goings on this block. How's that for a self-serving statement?

Look for more good news about this good old neighborhood in the other five pages of this issue. So much for the April Fool's edition.

Depot Town Association

TRU FAX

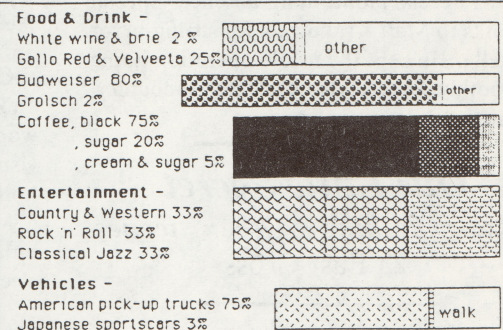
Your monthly graph to explain everything -



Patronize The
Merchants
That Bring You The

Depot Town Rag

What we consume
Down in Depot Town:



Big Bob's Magazines
Magazines, Comics, Posters
50 East Cross 485-4930

Continued from page one

everybody that 'the city' was not the place to be. Depot Town was around the corner and off the beaten path. It was next to the depot - and no one went there anymore. Nobody cared — and a lot of it was simply left alone.

But that's more a political story. Back to art. The cornices. Oh, yes. The crowns of the Italianate facade. Depot Town's had a variety of styles, and the cornice above the Follett House is a prime, but brand new, example. Those massive brackets were re-worked from another installation and made of fit where the originals hung. The copper sheathing of the roof, of course, is a modern adaptation and necessitates owner, Jerry Meadows, getting up on the roof after each snow storm with a broom. (Modern readers, please note: the Follett House is now several different packages of real estate with the Meadows/Suczek portion in the western three bays and the McKeever portion in the eastern two bays. They cooperated on the replication of the cornice, nonetheless!)

When they built the upper and lower cornices on the Masonic Block, they 'blipped' twice and careful observers can still see the texture in the first floor brick and the angle of the 'blind windows' above the third floor level. Imagine the block before the 1939 took down the eastern most bay and you'll see an almost-symmetrical facade with Gothic Revival arches as a focal point.

The Newel Block still shows the scoop in its interrupted brick near the former cornice. Note how the curves in the 'grid' change in proportion to match the first floor windows below. Sometimes you have to draw it several times before you can really see it. Ike's Barbershop has two scoops; Peddler's Path and Miller's Ice Cream Parlor get three. How fitting.



Standard Printing's cornice was a spectacular pressed metal job, repeated in the today's window caps. Look over Loren Hansen's desk in the print shop and you'll see a 1930's photo of that grand crown.

Thanks from the coffee shop

Recovering from her most recent eye operation, Farmers' Market Coffee Shop operator and Wednesday/Saturday hostess-with-the-mostess, Estella Sutherland, passes on copious thank-yous to all who helped out in her recent month-long absence. Special thanks to Matt Krakowiak for sitting-in for Estella. He kept the whole operation going smoothly. Estella is back behind her counter, again, as is lovelier than ever.

Our Little Secret

Resale Clothing & Other Niceties
23 East Cross

B & D Retail
Plumbing & Heating

310 North River 487-1510
Page 2 DTA, April 1988



City Body's form is still visible from the joists in the front wall, but notice how the brick 'fabriking' added to the long-gone wooden design. Such masonry could be blended into the wooden design, painted with clever contrasting colors, and give the impression of much more visual quality than was really there. After all, the interplay of lights and darks across the horizontal top edge of the building was what it was all about.

Miller Motors' cornice, albeit a stylistic design from another age, seems composed of light bulbs. How modern! A nice compatible touch for the building which manufactured the first electricity for this neighborhood.

Aubree's Saloon
& Second Floor
39 East Cross

Thompson Building Mall
Over 4000 square feet of dealers
412 North River • 484-4288



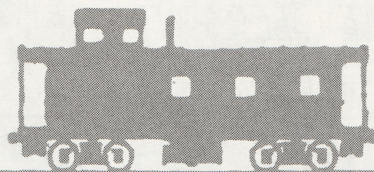
Thompson Block's was a simpler cornice, but a year older than the Masonic Block. The Great Northern Hotel was built at the end of the railhead where the triangular City park and the present depot now stand and was demolished to let the trains through to Ann Arbor, Chicago and points west. The new depot was built and bricks from the old Great Northern were used to construct the Thompson Block. A year later, the same builders put up the Masonic Block on Cross Street.

Vintage Passion's fake cornice is still not as deep as the original, genuine examples which have been removed, but the shadow is characteristic of the mood cast by all of them. A very different street scene. And it may be coming back soon. Meantime, we'll just have to settle for the drawing at the top of the front page of The Rag.

Depot Town's examples not only include top floor cornices, but first floor strips of decor. Look, also, for the even tinier cousins underneath many of the Italianate window sills in the district. Those little alternating bricks which look like teeth are called 'dentils.' What a great place for a dentist's office.

Most of the original cornices from Depot Town are long gone, but look for their new generation in the recent addition of brackets and fascia boards at the top of the Follett House. The only sad thing about this sensitive restoration is the fact that most casual observers don't even see it any more. Oh, it was great excitement to see it going up during the summer of 1986, but, after it had been up there for a month and the copper sheathing started to oxidize, most folks just took it for granted and assumed it had always been there. Would that the job of restoring or replacing or replicating cornices was so easy.

Next Month: Three Quoins in the Fountain? No. Standing on the corner! More musical architecture. Quoins. See the most obvious ones on the first floor facade of Hansen's Cross Street Antiques. See if you can find some distant relatives on the block.



D.T.A. 17 March 1988

Guests

-Ron Miller, Chair of Ypsilanti Heritage Festival

-Charles Soule, new 4th Ward Council member

18 February minutes approved as published
Treasury

Total	\$2798.27
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— A motion was passed to eliminate Halloween as a line item and consolidate it with the general fund. This change will be reflected in next month's treasurer's report.

Standing Committees— Membership/Volunteerism

-Bonni Rosen is currently issuing membership cards to DTA supporters. Get yours with a \$10 membership fee.

-Attention cowboys, cowgirls, and all our wonderful volunteers: Ypsi Opry's debut concert, featuring Nashville's Billy Walker, is scheduled for May 28. Anyone interested in helping make it a success and a regular event should contact Bonnie @ 482-FINE.

Caboose - The Caboose's renovation has been completed. It's a classy place to rent for your event. \$25 plus \$10 key deposit. Contact Gary McKeever @ 483-4256.

NIFTY (New Initiative For Tourism in Ypsilanti) - Classical arts in a classical setting is finding a home in Ypsilanti.

2nd Vice Presidents -

Merchants Committee - no report

Artists & Artisans - no report

Antique Dealers - no report

Engineering Society - if you have a job or project that needs doing, contact the Engineers via the Caboose, 400 Market Place, Ypsilanti, 48198.

Antique Engine Club - The DTAEC will be producing a poster advertising the Tail Gate Swap Meet as part of Depot Town's Memorial Day celebrations. It was reported that last month's train expedition to Toronto was a great success and lots of fun.

Foundation - next meeting is scheduled for the first Thursday in April. Subjects to be addressed will include future use of the Depot and the Millworks Building. The public is welcome.

Other Business

-The DTA Constitution was reviewed, bringing proposed changes in membership privileges and corrections of typographical errors.

- Mark Cotter, of Finn's JM&J Insurance, submitted a proposal for DTA's property liability insurance coverage.



**RIVER
ARTWORKS**

**CUSTOM
FRAMING
DESIGNER
MATS**

482-8785

48 E. CROSS
DEPOT TOWN

Ted's Auto Electric

307 North River • 483-1238
Page 3 DTA, April 1988

YPSI FOOD COOP



WHOLE NATURAL FOOD in Bulk
OR SMALL QUANTITIES

M,T,Th,F 10-7 Wed. 10-9 312 N. River
483-1520 Sat. 9-7 Sun. 12-5



**Olde Towne
Coin & Gold**

24 E. CROSS STREET
YPSILANTI, MI 48198

(313) 483-6155

PEDDLER'S PATH
44 East Cross

**WE love to BUY
ANTIQUES**

DEPOT EXCHANGE ANTIQUES

54 E Cross. • 482-1780
Next to Sidetrack
Professional Stripping & Refinishing

Old Town Restaurant
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
38 East Cross

City Body, Inc.

20 East Cross

Front Alignments
Special - \$24.95

Depot Doo

*Fine Design in
Hair Style*

25 East Cross • 484-3045



Every Wed. & Sat.
8 a.m. — 3 p.m.

Pronto Pizza

Pizza & Subs

37 East Cross • 483-4555

Page 6 DTA, April 1988



*Just like a real newspaper
Down in Depot Town*



Tel. (313) 483-5870

**J & J TRADING POST
GENERAL STORE**

*A Blend of Past & Present
With an Eye on The Future*

21 E. Cross St. • Depot Town

Something For Everyone

Cross Street Antiques
33 East Cross Street
Ypsilanti, Mich.

*Antiques Bought & Sold
Hours: Tues - Sun 11-5*

Phone (313) 482-4525

The Cricket Box

19 East Cross Street
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198
(313) 487-5595

Sidetrack

Good Food, Good Drinks,
Good Times

56 East Cross

483-1053

Miller's
SINCE 1896
ICE CREAM

*Open
All
Year!*

42 E. CROSS
HISTORIC DEPOT TOWN

The Vitamin Shoppe

Vitamins, Herbs,
Nutritional Suppliments
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651 Rice Street
*(just north of the Farmers' Market
in Ypsilanti's historic Depot Town)*
**Open every Saturday
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.**

Collecting newspaper, glass,
used motor oil and ferrous cans
A non-profit organization